

CONFERENCE REPORT

BORDER/S

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ABSTRACT The main purpose of the Conference was to start a debate about studies and research relating to the circulation of the different forms of knowledge in the Mediterranean Basin, in order to build tools for planning, managing and evaluating territorial actions able to produce a positive impact on the Europeanization and on the perception of Europe by the citizens. All this can not but go through radical analysis of the concept of “border”.

RIASSUNTO La Conferenza ha avuto come obiettivo l'avvio di un confronto su studi e ricerche relative alla circolazione delle differenti forme di sapere del bacino del Mediterraneo. Ciò al fine di costruire strumenti per la progettazione, la gestione e la valutazione di azioni territoriali in grado di produrre un impatto positivo sull'europeizzazione e sulla percezione dell'Europa da parte dei cittadini. Tutto questo però non può non passare che attraverso un'analisi radicale del concetto di “confine”.

KEYWORDS Border, Europe, Knowledge, Mediterranean, Policy

1st Annual International Conference – ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge

Border/s – 26th-28th October 2015, University of Salerno

The International Centre for Studies and Research *Mediterranean Knowledge* has just been established at the University of Salerno. The ICSR focuses on the Mediterranean as a place where several forms of knowledge, sociality and

culture have developed, met and clashed - a “liquid” border, in constant movement, which has generated a large part of ‘Western civilization,’ but which has also been a place of fierce confrontations.

A number of institutions have joined the ICSR. These are the Universities of Huelva and Seville (Spain), Porto (Portugal), Palermo and Salerno (Italy) and Malta, besides the *Institut Catholique de Toulouse* (France), the Cread (*Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement*) of Algeria and the Academy of Fine Arts of Naples.

The Conference *Border/s*, held at the University of Salerno, from 26th to 28th October 2015, has been the first important initiative of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*.

The main purpose of the Conference was to start a debate about studies and research relating to the circulation of the different forms of knowledge in the Mediterranean Basin, in order to build tools for planning, managing and evaluating territorial actions able to produce a positive impact on the Europeanization and on the perception of Europe by citizens in Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean. Against any metaphysical approach, ancient and modern, which attempts to immunize the human experience, the Institute seeks to address the urgent need to open a permanent space for debate and reflection in the field of human, philosophical and the social sciences. At the University of Salerno this is in keeping with the guidelines for research proposed by the Department of human, philosophical and educational sciences (DISUFF - *Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Filosofiche e della Formazione*). It is this department which was instrumental in establishing the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*.

The aim is to encourage and inspire thought that eschews pointless paralyzing identity issues and to be open to the articulation of knowledge on the basis of a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach. Scouring a terrain ranging from the human-social field to the economic-legal one, the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* focuses its attention on the valorization of the cultural heritage, legacy of thought, traditions, ethical, moral and religious values, and Mediterranean languages in a manner that lies at the furthest remove from an exclusionary and immunizing border policy.

The Conference, supported by the highest research institution in Italy, the National Council of Research (CNR - *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*), was of great scientific value and international importance, thanks to participation of speakers coming from six countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Malta, Algeria and Italy).

Border/s was opened by the formal greetings by the Rector of the University of Salerno, prof. Aurelio Tommasetti, and by the Director of the DISUFF, prof. Natale Ammaturo. Later the Director of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge*, prof. Emiliana Mangone, presented the initiative and its purposes; eng. Paolo Rocca Comite Mascambruno outlined the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* website (www.mediterraneanknowledge.org).

The opening session, chaired by Daniela Calabrò, centered on the *Lectio magistralis* 'Illimite', delivered by leading contemporary Western philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy – a philosopher whose talks and writings have for years been engaging with the definition of concepts such as “community”, “democracy”, “border”.

Session I was chaired by Luc-Thomas Somme, Rector of the Institut Catholique de Toulouse, and focused on the subject, *Moving Away from Borders? Between Economy, Society and Development*, with talks by Mohamed Benguerna, Pier Virgilio Dastoli and Folco Cimagalli and presentations by Marco Letizia, Giuseppe Masullo and Massimo Siani.

Session II, held on 27th October, was chaired by Giuseppe D'Angelo, conference co-convenor and professor of philosophy at the University of Salerno, and focused on the subject *The Paths/Roads Leading to Borders. Between Language, History and Myth*. Rosaria Caldarone, Angelo Cicutello, Mar Gallego, Bernard Callebat, Andrea Salvatore Antonio Barbieri, Girolamo Cotroneo and Jorge Martins Ribeiro presented their reports, followed by the short speeches by Erminio Fonzo, Mariarosaria Colucciello and Luca Scafoglio.

The chairperson of Session III, *Beyond Borders: Between Knowledge, Culture and Art*, was Andrea Bellantone, who introduced the reports by Anna Milione, Stefania Perna, Biancamaria Bruno, Alessandra Migliorato, Carmel Borg, Peter Mayo and Dario Giugliano, as well as the short reports

by Giovanni Tusa, Valentina Mascia, Massimo Villani and Annamaria Giarletta.

All sessions were attended by a large audience, composed mostly of students and professors of the University of Salerno. At the end of each session, debates and discussions arose not only among the speakers, but also, and most importantly, among the participating audience members.

The Conference, moreover, provided the occasion for the first meeting of the ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* scientific committee. *Border/s* concluded with the round table *Imago Europae/Vulnus Mediterranei*, held on 28th October and introduced by Emiliana Mangone, professor and main convenor of the conference. The other participants were Laura Balbo, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Padua, Italy, and former Minister of Equal Opportunities; Corrado Bonifazi, Director of the Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies-National Research Council (IRPPS-CNR - *Istituto di Ricerche sulla Popolazione e le Politiche Sociali-Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*), Italy; Maurizio Falco, Vice-Prefect, from the Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of Interior, Italy; Lucia Luzzolini, member of the Central Service for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR – *Servizio centrale per la protezione di richiedenti asilo e rifugiati*); Roberto Cortinovis, from the Foundation ISMU (*Iniziativa e Studi per la Multietnicità*), Italy; Aldo Masullo, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University “Federico II” of Naples, Italy; Massimo D’Alema, President of the Foundation *Italianieuropei* and former Presidente del Consiglio (Prime Minister of Italy) and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thanks to the involvement of political-institutional actors and to the authority of the participants, the round table proposed some responses and reflections for confronting the current dramatic situation of the Mediterranean Basin. The need for debates resulting in concrete proposals for action is urgent, given that the Mediterranean sea has been turning into a watery grave for thousands of hapless migrants from Africa and elsewhere, victims of mass exploitation, desperate to reach the shores of Europe with a view to living a better and more dignified life.

The ICSR *Mediterranean Knowledge* plans to publish, in

the coming months, some books containing the ideas and the reflections that arose at the Conference. Hopefully some of these will be reviewed in the spaces of this journal.

The hope is that a new and fruitful dialogue may start, in order to make border/s a place from where one veers towards the implementation of decisive and non-deferrable political strategies.